

Riparian Vegetation Management Task Force
Meeting Minutes for July 26, 2007, meeting in Franklin, Nebraska
(Minutes approved by the Task Force on 10/3/07)

1. Call to Order – Nebraska Director of Agriculture Greg Ibach called the meeting to order. Roll call was taken and each Task Force member did a self-introduction.
 - a. Task Force members present: Kent Aden, Greg Ibach, Ann Bleed, John Erickson, Mike Arps, Rich Tesar, Senator Deb Fischer, Senator Don Preister, Senator Cap Dierks, Senator Tom Carlson, Gloria Erickson, Mike Sarchet, Russ Shultz, Charles Brooks, Mike Clements, Gary Cunningham, and Kirk Nelson. Two Task Force members sent alternates: Milt Moravek for Ron Bishop and Dennis Adams for Scott Josiah. Task Force members who were absent included: Tom Thompson, Jim Miller, Senator John Harms, and Mike Linder.
 - b. Guests present included: John Thorburn, Dean Edson, Ginger Jensen with the Kearney Hub, Merle Illian, Alison Krohn and NDA staff members Rich Reiman, Mitch Coffin, and Bobbie Kriz-Wickham.
2. Senator Carlson provided opening remarks. He discussed the importance of the work of the task force and the importance of reporting that work to the Legislature. He said it is a necessity of the state to aid in vegetation removal and noted the need to document the removal activities as they occur.
3. Ibach opened up the election of Task Force officers.
 - a. For the office of chairman, Clements nominated Brooks. Bleed moved to close nominations, and the Task Force approved Brooks for chairman by unanimous voice vote.
 - b. Senator Preister asked about whether the meeting was being recorded. He said he believed an accurate record of the meetings was important so that the public could learn about the activities the task force was undertaking. There was discussion about keeping minutes and it was agreed to have official minutes.
 - c. Brooks opened up the nominations for vice chairman. Aden nominated Shultz. Bleed moved to close nominations, and the Task Force approved Shultz for vice chairman by unanimous voice vote.
 - d. Brooks opened up the nominations for secretary-treasurer. Senator Fischer nominated Ibach. Senator Preister moved to close nominations, and the Task Force approved Ibach for secretary-treasurer by unanimous voice vote.
4. The Task Force reviewed the proposed Operating Agreement, which will provide structure to the Task Force operations.
 - a. The group will operate with a simple majority necessary for quorum, and a super majority ($\frac{2}{3}$) of those present at a given meeting necessary for approving Task Force action. Twelve of the 23 members will be necessary for quorum.
 - b. The Task Force discussed the likelihood that it would need to access other experts to gather appropriate information for decision-making.

- c. Bleed moved to approve the Operating Agreement with an amendment that subcommittees could be utilized by the Task Force and those subcommittees could include members from outside the Task Force. The subcommittees can make recommendations to the Task Force but not make policy decisions. The subcommittee meetings would not have to be publicized. Shultz seconded the motion and the Task Force approved the amended Operating Agreement by unanimous voice vote.
- 5. The Task Force reviewed the proposed duties and responsibilities document as well as a goals and objectives document that was included in as a handout.
 - a. Sarchet moved to approve the duties and responsibilities document as presented; Erickson seconded the motion, and the Task Force approved the document by unanimous voice vote.
 - b. The group discussed the goals and objectives document and what the Task Force's role is. There was some concern about some of the statements in the goals and objectives document; John Erickson noted the document, at this point, was for informational purposes and did not need to be acted on. Bleed suggested that the goals for the next two years be to determine where we have major invasive problems in channels and establish and implement plans to manage and remove those species, and to develop appropriate monitoring and education to achieve those goals. Fischer suggested proposed goals be developed and circulated for consideration, in advance of the next Task Force meeting. There was discussion about whether the Task Force role included oversight of the Riparian Vegetation Management Grant Program. Carlson said the intent of LB 701 was not for the Task Force to manage the grant program, but to be aware of the activities being undertaken as part of the grant program and utilize relevant information from that program to help develop long-term plans for the management of invasive vegetation in riparian areas.
- 6. NDA staff member Mitch Coffin reviewed the Task Force handbook, which includes various pieces of information, such as expense report documents, a listing of task force members, press releases, and other materials of interest to the members.
- 7. NDA staff member Mitch Coffin provided an overview of the Riparian Vegetation Management Grant Program, which is being coordinated by NDA. Four grants have been awarded.
 - a. Senator Preister asked about assessment of grant results, as well as oversight of the projects. Ibach noted grantees are required to provide reports to NDA, and NDA staff member Rich Reiman noted field staff will be involved with oversight. Nelson said Game and Parks staff also would be involved with the projects.
 - b. Sarchet provided a brief overview of the Nine Mile Creek project.
- 8. Under New Business, Aden gave a PowerPoint presentation on Republican River invasive vegetation management issues.
 - a. The Task Force asked Merle Illian to talk about the Twin Valley Weed Management Area's Eastern Republican Riparian Improvement Project. The project is one of the four Riparian Vegetation Management Grant Program awardees. The group discussed all four projects and talked about long-term management of vegetation in the riparian areas once the initial

project work is completed. There was some concern about having this type of management in place so that the state funds are used wisely. Nelson said he was concerned about quick pace of the four grant projects and whether enough information existed to understand the ramifications of the projects. Senator Preister said he was concerned because he thought the role of the task force was to look at the grants and help make some decisions about them. Shultz said the initial grants will be part of a learning process that will utilize the best knowledge and tools available to date. Clements said some of invasive management work on the Republican River includes very specific testing and monitoring of practices.

- b. Bleed suggested a committee was needed to pull together a draft of what will be needed for the report to the Governor in December 2007.
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- 9. The next meeting was scheduled for 10:00 a.m. on September 13; the Central Platte Natural Resources District volunteered to host the meeting.
 - 10. The meeting was adjourned at 2:16 p.m. The group departed for an airboat tour on the Republican River.

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